

Survey Research Methods
LPO 3908
Spring 2006
Monday 9:00 – 12:00
Wyatt 144 (LSI Conference Room)

Instructor:

Mark Berends

Associate Professor of Public Policy and Education

Office: Wyatt 410E

Phone: (615) 322-8045

Email: mark.berends@vanderbilt.edu

Office Hours:

By Appointment

call Susie Jackson 322-8107

COURSE OVERVIEW

The goal of this course is to extend our knowledge of survey data—where it comes from and its uses for theory and research.

This course provides an introduction to the conceptual issues raised by conducting measurement using self-reports in surveys, an overview of the literature that addresses theoretical and practical problems in questionnaire design, and practice in developing, reviewing, and writing standardized questions and questionnaires. Particular attention is paid to recent work that draws on cognitive psychology to inform designing standardized instruments. The course is structured around the stages of instrument development: developmental interviewing, question writing, question testing, pretesting, and questionnaire formatting. It is my hope that the conceptual and practical tools introduced in this course should be useful in planning and conducting your own research.

Most of the course is studying how surveys can be developed and how survey data can be analyzed. While this course is not about statistics, per se, you will be introduced to some basic statistical procedures.

The objectives of this course are to:

- Provide students with the knowledge and tools necessary to design, conduct, interpret, and evaluate educational survey data;
- Prepare students to conduct their doctoral dissertations, and subsequent related work after graduation; and
- Allow students to become actively (rather than passively) involved in the learning process through discussions, presentations, and practical applications.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & EXPECTATIONS

This course is a graduate seminar where learning is best facilitated by active discussion. The comments and questions you have will help your classmates. Therefore, everyone is to prepare a set of discussion questions based on the readings. Be sure to include each topic covered in the readings. Your discussion questions should reflect thinking about the material and facilitate your involvement in class. You may address topics you don't quite understand, raise questions about apparent conflicts among the readings, apply past to the new material, etc. These are to be turned in no later than Friday afternoon.

For most weeks, two students will lead a discussion of what you considered to be some salient or provocative points of the readings assigned for a particular topic. The discussion leaders will produce a joint 2-page summary that will be submitted to me by Thursday evening, which I will then send to the rest of the class. The aim is to summarize the key points of the readings and raise issues and questions, share ideas, and draw conclusions. Some things to consider in leading class discussion are:

1. In what way(s) did the assigned reading change or challenge your previous understanding or beliefs about the topic(s)? What did you find useful or thought provoking and why?
2. What examples have you seen or experienced that would support or conflict with what you read? From your knowledge and experience, are there other important issues that need to be considered in regard to the assigned readings?
3. Were the readings flawed in any way (e.g., logic, method, rigor, limited in scope, clearly push an agenda rather than being objective)?
4. Did you reach any firm conclusions about the topic(s)?

Keeping track of your learning is important. During the semester I will ask you to briefly meet with me individually to discuss your experience in the course. This is an opportunity to talk about what you are learning and possible steps that can be taken to make the class as valuable as possible for you. This is my second time teaching this course. It is intended to help you. Thus, my intent is to be flexible given the desires of students in the class around the issues of survey research methods.

Required Books

There are several required books for this course as well as readings that will be available on Blackboard. Because certain methods books resonate with individuals differently, I have chosen a set of books that speak to the issues covered in the course in different ways. Thus, some of the readings for certain weeks may seem redundant. This is intended to reinforce the points made and to provide various avenues for a more thorough understanding of the topics. In the future, the books below will continue to be a resource for those relying survey methods.

Converse, J. M., & Presser, S. (1986). *Survey questions: Handcrafting the standardized questionnaire*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

DeVellis, R. F. (2003). *Scale development: Theory and applications*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Fowler, F. J. (1995). *Improving survey questions: Design and evaluation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Nardi, P. M. (2006). *Doing survey research A guide to quantitative methods, 2nd edition*. New York: Allyn and Bacon.

Tourangeau, R., Rips, L. J., & Rasinski, K. (2000). *The psychology of survey response*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

ASSIGNMENTS

1. **Article Analysis I** will be handed out on **January 30** and is due **February 13**. You will be required to select a research article in a leading AERA journal (or another article I approve) and critically assess the survey research methodology based on the readings and discussions in this course.
2. **Article Analysis II**. This assignment is to act as a reviewer of an article—identifying strengths and weaknesses related to the survey methods used in the paper. This assignment will be handed out on **February 27** and due on **March 20**.
3. **Survey Design Project**. In groups, you will design a survey and collect data about an education issue to validate newly developed or previously developed survey measures and draw inferences about the variables under study on the survey. A 1-2 page prospectus on what this project is will be due **March 13**. This project is due on **Friday, April 28**.

EVALUATION

Evaluation of student performance will be as follows:

Discussion Questions and Participation	25%
Article Analysis I	20%
Article Analysis II	20%
Data Collection and Analysis Project	35%
Total	<u>100%</u>

GRADING

For each component of this course receiving a grade, the assignment grades will be earned as follows:

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
A	≥ 95
A-	90-94
B+	85-89
B	80-84
B-	75-79
C+	70-74
C	<70

COURSE POLICIES

Individual efforts are governed by the Vanderbilt Honor Code and are expected to be your own work. Team projects require working together, sharing ideas, and providing feedback. These will further your understanding of how advanced organizational theories apply to organizational settings and do not conflict with the Honor Code. If you need course accommodations due to a disability, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible.

COURSE READINGS & SCHEDULE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO SURVEY RESEARCH

Week 1. January 16. Introduction to Course.

Brunch at my house.

Week 2. January 23. Basics of Research

Nardi, P. M. (2006). *Doing survey research*. (Ch. 1 & 3).

Berends, Mark. (2006). Survey methods in educational research. In Gregory Camilli, Patricia B. Elmore, & Judith Green (Eds.), *Contemporary methods for research in education, 3rd edition*, pp. 521-538. Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association. **Blackboard**

Whetten, D. A. (1989). What constitutes a theoretical contribution? *The Academy of Management Review*, 14(4), 490-495. **Blackboard**

Hox, Joop J. (1997). From theoretical concept to survey question. In L. Lyberg, P. Biemer, M. Collins, E. de Leeuw, C. Dippo, N. Schwarz, & D. Trewin (Eds.), *Survey measurement and process quality*, pp. 47-70. N.Y.: Wiley-Interscience. **Blackboard**

Week 3. January 30. Survey Response Process

Tourangeau, Roger, Lance Rips, and Ken Rasinski. (2000). *The psychology of survey response*. Cambridge. (Chapters 1, 2, 8).

First short paper assigned

HOW TO PUT A SURVEY TOGETHER

Week 4. February 6. Selecting an Approach for Data Collection

Ellen Goldring on mixed methods within a randomized field trial

Tourangeau, Roger, Lance Rips, and Ken Rasinski. (2000). *The psychology of survey response*. Cambridge. (Chapter 10).

Schwartz, N. (1999). Self-reports: How the questions shape the answers. *American Psychologist*, 54(2), 93-105. **Blackboard**

Schaeffer, N. C., & Presser, S. (2003). The science of asking questions. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 29, 65-88. **Blackboard**

Week 5. February 13. Developing Surveys

First short paper due

Brian Heuser guest speaker on online surveys.

Converse, J. M., & Presser, S. (1986). *Survey questions: Handcrafting the standardized questionnaire*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Babbie, E. (2001). *The practice of social research, 9th edition (Chapter 9)*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. **Blackboard**

Discuss final assignment

Week 6. February 20. Questions about Factual Events and Subjective States

Fowler, F. J. (1995). *Improving survey questions: Design and evaluation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. **(Chapters 2 & 3)**.

Week 7. February 27. Designing Survey Instruments

Andy Porter guest speaker on designing surveys

Fowler, F. J. (1995). *Improving survey questions: Design and evaluation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. **(Chapter 4)**.

Nardi, P. M. (2006). *Doing survey research, (Chapter 4)*.

Second short paper assignment handed out in class; due March 20

Week 8. March 8. Spring Break.

Week 9. March 13. Sampling

Babbie, E. (2001). *The practice of social research, 9th edition (Chapter 7)*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. **Blackboard**

Nardi, P. M. (2006). *Doing survey research, (Chapter 5)*.

1-2 page prospectus for final project due

Week 10. March 20. Question Testing, Cognitive Labs, and Expert Review

Laura Desimone guest speaker on cognitive labs

Tourangeau, Roger, Lance Rips, and Ken Rasinski. (2000). *The psychology of survey response*. Cambridge. **(Chapter 11)**.

Blair, J., & Presser, S. (1993). Survey procedures for conducting cognitive interviews to pretest questionnaires: A review of theory and practice. *Proceedings of the survey research methods section of the American Statistical Association*. **Blackboard**

Jobe, J., & Mingay, D. (1991). Cognition and survey measurement: History and overview. *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, 5, 175-192. **Blackboard**

Desimone, L. M., & Le Floch, K. C. (2004). Are we asking the right questions? Using cognitive interviews to improve surveys in education research. *Education Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 26(1), 1-22. **Blackboard**

Second short paper due

ANALYZING SURVEY DATA

Week 11. March 27. Issues of Validity and Reliability

DeVellis, R. F. (2003). *Scale development: Theory and applications*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. **(Chapter 1-4)**.

Week 12. April 3. Developing Scales

DeVellis, R. F. (2003). *Scale development: Theory and applications*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. **(Chapter 5-6)**.

Cortina, J.M. (1993). What is coefficient alpha? An examination of theory and applications. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 78, 98-104. **Blackboard**

Week 13. April 10. No Class AERA.

Week 14. April 17. Reporting.

Nardi, P. M. (2006). *Doing survey research*, **(Chapter 6)**.

Week 15. April 24. Project Presentations.

Final project due Friday, April 28.